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[]-3317-63

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20 September 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director, OSA
Deputy Assistant Director, OSA

SUBJECT : Surfacing of OXCART-Type Vehicle

REFERENCE : Memorandum to AD/OSA and DAD/OSA, dated
19 September 1963, same subject as above,
[]-3270-63

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1. I see from the questioning which reference memorandum has stimulated that by sowing the seeds of this proposal, I had only begun to face the issue and hence realize now that my memo should have followed the proposal through to harvest. In surfacing an OXCART-type vehicle such as the LRI and admitting that the program had been initiated under CIA auspices, I did not intend to open the doors wide to any and all questions which might be posed by press and public regarding how this was accomplished. I had anticipated that such surfacing would be accomplished in the form of a press release which would merely state the existence of this aircraft, some of its potential uses, and acknowledge that fact that it was an outgrowth of a CIA program for a follow-on to U-2. Such a release would also acknowledge that since methods of procurement and modus operandi employed by CIA to accomplish such a result remain secret, that it is not intended that there be any question and answer period regarding the development and production of the aircraft. Equally important to allay the fears of the public, the press release must also acknowledge the fact that many members of both the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as other key officials of the U.S. Government, have been witting of the program since its inception.

2. Since the DOD at this time does not intend to procure additional LRI aircraft, I suggest that it is mandatory that the LRI aircraft continue to be based at [] to provide the necessary cover for the activity which we will continue to conduct from that site. We can also attest to the soundness of continued operations

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out [] since the base had been constructed to support the flight testing and because of its advanced nature, high performance, etc., it is desirable that that testing continue to be conducted away from any populated area. One key factor that we must adhere to in any such release is that whatever method of release is employed, or whoever the spokesmen might be, we cannot ever permit a question and answer period, but must stick exclusively to the script prepared and specifically indicate that further discussion on the subject will not be entertained.

3. There may be some trepidation among the fainthearted that a surfacing of any nature will blow the OXCART side of the program. I would like to call attention to the fact that the IDEALIST program underwent tremendous scrutiny and surfacing following the 1 May 1960 incident, yet we managed quite successfully, I would say, to continue the IDEALIST program with the same effective security that had been maintained beforehand.

4. There are indeed certain trade-offs which must be considered in a surfacing of this type. We can never hope to achieve the most perfect story under the most perfect set of circumstances. We simply have to content ourselves with the acknowledgment that a surfacing under controlled circumstances is far more desirable than one in an arena not of our own choosing.

5. I venture to say that the only alternative to the surfacing that has been suggested is to adopt the policy that no comment will be made regardless of any accident or any press attention whatsoever. I hold little hope in the ability of the U.S. Government to hold to such a line.



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